

INTRODUCTION OF THE CLERGY FREEDOM OF CHOICE ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 1999

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the Clergy Freedom of Choice Act. Under current law, clergy may opt out of Social Security within 2 years of ordination. My legislation extends this provision, to allow clergy to opt out at any time in their career.

For some clergy, they will choose to opt out for religious reasons, while others will do so because their particular denomination, sect or organization makes other arrangements for their retirement. It is important to note that this opt-out will only apply to income derived from pastoral duties.

I expect this legislation to be non-controversial, as it simply extends the current opt-out option for our religious leaders, providing them with a way to exercise their freedom of choice.

I ask my colleagues to join me in giving our pastors, priests, rabbis, and other clergy this choice.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRAINING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 1999

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, today, with the leadership of Congressman CHRISTOPHER SMITH and the bipartisan support of 48 of my colleagues, I sponsored the International Military Training Transparency and Accountability Act. This legislation will ensure that the United States armed forces ceases to assist foreign militaries that do not share our respect for human rights.

Specifically, the bill prohibits the U.S. from providing military services or training to countries that are restricted by U.S. law from receiving International Military Education and Training (IMET) or other military assistance because of their strong record of human rights violations. This bill will also ensure that the Department of Defense cannot circumvent Congressional intent and find other methods in which to engage with foreign militaries that are notorious human rights abusers.

The Pentagon's relationship with the Indonesian military in recent years demonstrates the urgency and necessity of this legislation. In 1992, Congress banned U.S. taxpayer funded IMET training in the wake of the brutal Dili massacre, where over 270 peaceful demonstrators were shot down in an East Timor cemetery. This ban was enacted in an attempt to put an end to the egregious human rights abuses the Indonesian government committed against its own people and the people of East Timor.

Since 1975, the Indonesian government has engaged in a reign of terror in East Timor, implementing a policy of severe repression of

the Timorese people. Since the onset of the occupation, over 200,000—one-third of the original population—have perished. Extra-judicial killings, kidnappings, tortures and imprisonments have become a way of life for those who challenge the authoritarian regime.

In 1997, I wrote Secretary of Defense William Cohen, requesting detailed information on the training of members of the Kopassus, the elite, special forces division of the Indonesian military. The Kopassus is infamous for its role as the ruthless enforcer of Indonesia's illegal occupation of East Timor. Shortly thereafter, I received a response from the Pentagon describing the United States' continued training of the Indonesian military under another program—the Joint Combined Exchange and Training (JCET) program. While the JCET program is legal, it violated the spirit of Congressional efforts to ban any military assistance to the notoriously brutal and repressive Indonesian armed forces.

Under the auspices of the JCET program, U.S. Special Operations forces trained the Kopassus in sniper skills, marksmanship, and close quarter combat, all while the Kopassus continued to repress and terrorize the people of East Timor. In Spring, 1998, the Pentagon announced it would cease its military relationship with Indonesia indefinitely. Yet, the Pentagon's decision to end military exercises with the Indonesian forces should not have come voluntarily. It should be illegal for our armed services to engage in any manner with known human rights violators.

More important, this legislation will limit U.S. assistance to egregious violators of human rights. In Latin America, and in Africa—the U.S. continues to train and engage with forces that are well-known for their disregard for basic human dignity. The International Military Training Transparency and Accountability Act will clarify our stance on engagement with brutal military forces. We have a responsibility to ensure that our national security policy embodies the very democratic principles it seeks to defend.

NORTHERN IRELAND PEACE PROCESS—ST. PATRICK'S DAY, MARCH 1999

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, as Saint Patrick's Day approaches once again, permit me to share some thoughts with my colleagues concerning the peace process in Ireland.

Ireland is at another critical crossroads in its search for a lasting peace and justice. The difficult struggle in the north of Ireland is of concern to millions of Americans, as well as the peace loving people all over the world.

Last year was an historic chapter in Irish history. The Good Friday accord was signed on April 3rd. The Irish people, both in the north and south, overwhelmingly endorsed that peace accord in a public referendum. The people in the north in May then elected, as part of the terms of the peace accord, a new Northern Ireland assembly to govern much of their own internal affairs.

Regrettably, as has so often been the case over the last several years, the issue of IRA arms "decommissioning" is still a major obstacle to further progress in the effort to bring about a permanent lasting peace and real concrete change to the north of Ireland. These are common goals which we, and most of the people in all of Ireland accept, and want desperately for their children and for future generations.

What is still lacking is the political will and leadership on the ground in the north, especially in the unionist community, to begin to bring about the much needed real change, genuine "power sharing" and an end to the unsatisfactory status quo of unionist domination.

The arms issue is once again being used as the old "unionist veto" which blocks progress and full implementation of the Good Friday peace accords.

In particular, the decommissioning issue is being used to block the creation of a new Northern Ireland cabinet level executive intended to help govern the north, as well as to help implement the new North/South bodies under the Good Friday accord. All of the steps needed to devolve that power sharing arrangement have been taken by Westminster, and now all we need is strong leadership from the Northern Ireland Secretary of State, the British government and the unionist leadership in the north to create the new executive.

The new cabinet executive must include the second major nationalist (Catholic) party Sinn Fein. It won that legitimate right through the ballot box and the democratic process to participate and govern the north, as well as to participate fully in the new North/South cross border bodies to govern the new Ireland.

Like it or not, the unionists must acknowledge that Sinn Fein has a legitimate democratic mandate, which under the terms of the accord, entitles them to two ministerial posts on the new Executive Cabinet to be formed.

The Good Friday Accord did not make the issue of IRA decommissioning a precondition to Sinn Fein's entry into government and the new institutions it established. It provides only for best efforts and the hopeful completion of the arms decommissioning process by the year 2000.

What is needed is not more calls for symbolic arms destruction gestures in the midst of a genuine cease-fire, but substantial power sharing as envisioned by the Good Friday accord.

The entire complex Good Friday accord and peace process will work only if everyone keeps their word and does not seek revenge on those portions of the agreement they now profess to dislike.

There can be no unilateral re-negotiations now of portions of the accord that some parties decide they don't want to honor, especially now that the day for power sharing is soon to be upon them.

Yet, sadly, the IRA arms issue is once again being used as a red herring to re-write and undo the Good Friday accord and to thwart the will of the Irish people who voted in massive numbers for the accord and for peaceful political change.

It is time to get on with it, and put an end to the unionist veto which for far too long has

been used to maintain the unsatisfactory status quo which is in the north of Ireland today.

We all know far too well how political vacuums in the past have been filled in Northern Ireland. No one wants a return of violence on all sides.

Change must come on the ground. The nationalist community must be given equality and be given their rightful voice in the future of the new north. Many in the nationalist community have chosen Sinn Fein to represent them in the new government and no one has the right to try to undo that election.

We also need to see new and acceptable community policing in the north, and equal opportunity and a shared economic future.

Our House International Relations Committee will be holding full committee hearings on April 22nd on the need for new and acceptable policing in the north. We will be taking constructive testimony from witnesses from the north and the leading international human rights groups on the question of reform of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), and the compelling need for new and acceptable policing. The new police service must be both responsive and accountable as envisioned by the Good Friday accord.

We look forward to constructive ideas for meaningful police reform in the north to emerge from our hearings and examination of this vital question. More than 9000 witnesses and 2000 written submissions on this important issue have been presented to the Patten Commission which has been examining this issue in Northern Ireland.

Our hearing efforts will add to that record and will consider police reform in other parts of the world, which have brought about change and improved public support for the police.

We must work together to bring about concrete meaningful change and reform in the north.

At a minimum, if the RUC is not disbanded, as many in the nationalist community are demanding based on years of harsh experience and great pain and suffering, we need real and concrete responses and a major change as soon as possible. At a minimum, there must be root and branch reforms of the RUC including such proposals as follows:

1. Bringing in new police leadership, starting at the very top, who will publicly apologize to all of the community for past policing abuses to help bring about much needed reconciliation. The new leadership must also actively work to bring about fundamental changes essential to building broad cross community support through, among other things, actively working to make the police representative of the community as a whole.

2. A new, younger police personnel, including new mid-level officials who truly reflect and substantially represent the whole community they serve, which will help the new policing gain badly needed community acceptance and support. If this fundamental reform requires a one time temporary change in the Northern Ireland Fair Employment laws to help build a representative police service, it will be justified by a current 93% dominated Protestant force.

3. Clear and unequivocal right to dismiss (consistent with due process) by the head of the policing service of any police officers who

do not measure up to new performance and human rights standards, and/or who based upon evidence of their human rights records have failed to respect fundamental human rights, and/or the diversity that is the north of Ireland.

Both within the police service (reporting directly to the head of the police), and outside the new police entity as well, there must be independent investigative authorities. These investigative entities must be freely able to conduct inquiries into police abuses and misconduct, which may in turn justify and require the firing of police officers acting under their direction to the head of the police based on their investigative findings; or alternatively where appropriate based upon their investigations, the prosecution of police officers under the law by authorities outside the police.

These strong no nonsense disciplinary actions must regularly follow whenever evidence of wrongdoing is uncovered (either by internal or external methods), and they must result in appropriate and timely disciplinary action and/or prosecution where warranted.

4. Prohibition on police membership in the Orange Order and any other societies whose very principles and practices are inconsistent with developing broad cross community support for the police. This too may require a change in current Northern Ireland law, but is fully justifiable. This is critical to helping develop a working environment that can and will attract, as well as to hold Catholics in the police service. Any on the job harassment or intimidation of the nationalist community members must also be banned, and severely punished, whenever it is established.

5. Repeal of the emergency power authorities, and restoration of the right to silence without any adverse inferences of guilt to be drawn from the exercise of this fundamental right by those detained for questioning by the police in Northern Ireland. Such reforms will help make more routine, as well as clearly define and normalize daily contacts by the police with the community.

6. Increased professional human rights and respect for diversity training, both for new recruits and current police personnel at all levels. The increased training should also include cross border training and exercises with the Garda in the Republic of Ireland.

7. De-centralization of the police force from the few current and large divisional levels down to much smaller units (e.g. precincts, wards, or constituency based units). This would help bring the new police much closer to the community and increase the ability to communicate and inter-act together. It can serve to build better local community support through greater accountability for the "faceless police force" that serves many nationalist areas today.

8. Close Castlereagh and other interrogation centers as a important gesture of reconciliation and change to many who see it as "symbolic" of so many of the RUC abuses in the nationalist community.

9. Eventual devolution of the policing issue to local government control when true power sharing and equality have been established. This too can help increase "local accountability" and build support for the new policing service.

10. Recruitment and processing for entry into the new police service should be done in as many local communities (including nationalist areas) as possible throughout the north of Ireland and not limited in just one location in a unionist area. This will better serve in helping to outreach, and increase the diversity and attractiveness of the new police force, to the nationalist community.

11. End the paramilitary role and ethos of the RUC, and turn the new service into a community policing service to serve the needs of all the community, not suppressing and politically controlling portions of it. Based on the British policing model, the new policing service in a peaceful north of Ireland, should prevent the carrying of sidearms.

12. Change the title, uniform and other unacceptable symbols of the current police service in order to help create a new and acceptable community policing service. The process of separation of the policing duties from the security situation and concerns, must begin as soon as possible. These symbolic changes must also be made in a sensitive and mindful way, especially for the families of the more than 300 RUC officers who have been killed wearing the current uniform during the troubles.

As we approach Saint Patrick's Day 1999, it is time to get on with the peace process, ending the foot dragging, and implement the will of the good and generous Irish people in the north of Ireland.

May we soon see peace, justice and a unified Ireland.

HONORING HEALTH ADVOCATES

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 1999

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of a wonderful organization devoted to improving the quality of life in Michigan and throughout the country, the American Lung Association. On March 18, the American Lung Association of Michigan, Genesee Valley Region, will hold their 16th Annual Health Advocate Awards Dinner, where they will honor Dr. Samuel J. Dismond, Jr. as their Individual Health Advocate and HealthPlus of Michigan as Corporate Health Advocate for the year 1998.

The Association's criteria for Individual Health Advocate includes a minimum of 5 years on a health association board or participation in a health related activity, and outstanding contributions to health education and promotion of research. Dr. Samuel Dismond, Jr. serves as a shining example of this commitment to health issues.

Dr. Dismond currently serves as Chief of Staff at Hurley Medical Center in Flint, Michigan, which employs approximately 2,500 employees and 475 attending physicians who serve more than 20,000 patients annually. He has been honored as Michigan Family Physician of the Year in 1997 by the Michigan Academy of Family Practice, and also as 1999 Family Physician of the United States by the American Academy of Family Physicians. Dr.